

# STATE OF KANSAS KANSAS ANIMAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**George Teagarden, Livestock Commissioner**

708 SW Jackson, Topeka, Kansas 66603-3714

Phone 785/296-2326 FAX 785/296-1765

[www.accesskansas.org/kahtd](http://www.accesskansas.org/kahtd)

---

## **Frequently asked questions and answers about the National Animal Identification System (NAIS)**

- **Why do we need an identification system?** Animal identification is not new. Animals have been identified in all of our regulatory programs since at least 1927 when the tuberculosis eradication effort began. Currently, all breeding cattle, swine and sheep must be identified by an official tag or tattoo for interstate transport. Horses in interstate commerce must be identified by description.
- **What is the advantage of the NAIS?** NAIS is for disease tracking. The goal is to allow the rapid tracking of animals during a disease outbreak. The system is designed to allow state and federal officials to trace an individual animal, throughout its life, in 48 hours. The tracking system used today can take days or months to trace back animals. Even then, the search often leads to a dead end.
- **Has Kansas registered premises prior to the implementation of NAIS?** Yes. Kansas has been registering premises for years. Currently, all feedlots, livestock markets and livestock dealers are registered in Kansas. Most swine premises are registered as well. All U.S. premises with sheep are required to be registered by individual states as part of the Scrapies Control Program.
- **What definition of Premises is used for the National Animal Identification System?** An identifiable geographic location under common ownership or management used for the purpose of feeding, grazing and/or other activity where the animals are not interchanged or commingled with animals from outside the Premises. The key words are ownership or management - where commingling does not occur.
- **How many “premises” should I register?** One or more, depending on whether you commingle the animals. If, for example, you have two herds – one commercial and one registered - that are never commingled you would probably want to register both premises. If you have only registered one premise and there is a disease outbreak both herds will be quarantined. By registering two premises, depending on the disease, you might have one herd quarantined, but not both.

- **I own some land, but I also rent additional pasture, how should I register a premises?** Register *your own land in your name* and list the rented pasture in the section of the application that asks for “additional premises” information. The rented premises should be registered in the land owners name, with you listed as the contact person.
- **Is there a cost to registering premises?** Not at this time. The USDA has provided funding for premises registration to Kansas and other states who utilize the federal registration system.
- **Why can’t I use my Scrapie Control Program premises number?** Scrapie programs are operated as state programs and the premises number is unique to each state’s program. The national animal identification system will provide a uniform set of premises numbers nationwide.
- **Why not use the brucellosis tags?** The U.S. is nearly free of brucellosis so many heifers are not officially calfhood vaccinated. Under the current program, only OCV’d heifers and adult tested cattle are tagged. The cattle program for NAIS is being planned to move at the speed of commerce. To do this, the recommended tags will be radio frequency identification devices (RFID) that are electronic. Bangs tags are not electronic and must be read then recorded by hand.
- **Why won’t a brand work?** Brands are only good in the jurisdiction where they are issued and only identify the premises, not individual animals. A Kansas brand does not mean anything in other states. In Texas, where brand registration is on a county basis, 140 individuals could have the same brand. Brands are sometimes hard to read due to improper technique or the reader’s lack of knowledge of the brand alphabet.
- **Is this identification system part of “COOL”?** No. The National Animal Identification System is for disease control purposes, not for country of origin labeling programs. It is not a component of the COOL law, but because the official RFID devices will have a country of origin code number, it could be used for COOL purposes.
- **Won’t the NAIS cost producers a lot of money?** A disease outbreak would cost both producers and the government a tremendous amount of money. Currently, if there is a highly contagious disease, such as foot and mouth, both the industry and individual producers would suffer financially because of slow, incomplete tracing of the animals. The national animal identification system will allow the rapid tracing of animals, help limit the scope and expense of managing an outbreak and minimize an outbreak’s impact on domestic and foreign markets.
- **Does the cow/calf producer bear all the costs?** No. The cow/calf producer has the responsibility to purchase tags and apply them as cattle enter commerce. The receivers bear the cost of readers and re-tagging lost or non-reading tags.

- **Do I have to have a (radio frequency) reader?** No. The responsibility of the first known producer is to apply an electronic tag. It is the responsibility of the receiver to document and report the transaction. Preferably, this will be done electronically but hand written documents will be accepted.
- **When will recordings be made of livestock movement?** At any change of ownership, change of premises where commingling occurs, all interstate movement (even without an ownership change) and slaughter.
- **Do I have to record individual numbers when I change pastures?** If you are changing pastures within your operation, the answer is no. If you move animals to a premise that is not part of your operation you need to record the movement.
- **I rent pasture (grass, wheat, stalk fields); do I have to make a record of movement to these pastures?** If these pastures are part of a single operation; you do not need to make a record unless commingling occurs.
- **Do I have to report the movement of my cattle when I sell them?** No. It is the buyer's responsibility to report the new location of the cattle.
- **Where will I get tags?** There are several companies that will meet the standards to manufacture tags for this program. You will be able to get various tags from official NAIS tag distributors (approved manufactures or venders). We anticipate that many of your current venders will carry these tags.
- **Can I get my calves tagged at the market?** Some markets are planning to provide that service, but will charge a fee in addition to the cost of the tag. You will probably have more shrinkage due to extra handling and time involved than having it done before the cattle leave your operation. You should check with your market before consignment to see if they are offering the service.
- **Can these tags be used a second time?** No, these tags are designed for single use and will be tamper-evident. Enough numbers are assigned so that individual numbers that will not be duplicated for at least 20 years. All tags received at the slaughter house will be destroyed
- **What if I receive animals with lost tags?** You should replace the lost tags with tags of your own that are registered to your premises. Report the lost tag to the Kansas Animal Health Department. Your records should reflect that the cow did not have a tag when it arrived and you should record the number that you re-tagged it with.
- **What if a cow or calf dies?** Report the death and ID number to the state office and make note in your own records. There will be codes provided to record this type of information.

- **How do you know if the animal is from the U.S.?** The official 15 digit tag will have the first three numbers indicating the country of origin. The official number for the U.S. is 840.
- **Will everyone have access to information gathered by the government?**  
Kansas law requires the state Animal Health Department to keep information confidential. Unless you share the information with others, only state and federal animal health officials will have access to the information. The premises identification numbers (PIN) will not be part of the ear tag. They will only be used to identify the land owner/manager and they will be maintained in a separate data base from individual animal identification numbers. Individual animal numbers will not give any indication as to the origin of the animal, except that it is from the USA or another country.
- **What about my production and management records?** Animal health officials are only interested in the birth herd and when and where the animal stopped during its life. Production/management records are not part of the data base used to track animal movements for the NAIS disease control program. Those records are for the herd owner's use only.

1/6/2005